REMARKS

In response to the Examiner's objections, the drawing Figs. 3B; 3C; 4B; 4C; and 4E have been amended to provide a more distinct indication of fluid flow through the systems. Fig. 4D is not amended, because it does not include indications of fluid flow. The Examiner's objection to Fig. 3A (no figure "36") is believed to have been remedied by an amendment to the specification (Paragraph on page 8, lines 12 to 17), substituting figure "54" for figure "36."

The first page of the specification has been amended to update the status of related applications. The specification has also been amended in several places to clarify the terminology "residual air volume" of the air tube and the space within the air reservoir that surrounds the air tube (which are designated, respectively, V1 and V2) and "incremental air volume" (which is designated V_i). Incremental air volume V_i is the sum of the residual air volumes V1 and V2.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. New dependent claims 3 and 4 have been added.

Claims 1 to 4 remain in the application. Of these, claim 1 is the sole independent system claim.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested in light of these amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1 and 2 (the Examiner refers to these as claims 20 and 21) stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based upon Balteau US 4,790,815 (Balteau) (applicable to Claim 1) and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based upon Balteau in view of Page et al US 5,601,730 (Page) (applicable to Claim 2).

The original independent system claim 1 has been amended to define a heat sterilized blood processing system comprising a first container and a second container that defines an air reservoir that is coupled in-line with the first container by flexible transfer tubing. As defined in amended claim 1, the flexible transfer tubing includes a peripheral wall made from flexible plastic material that, when subject to heat sterilization, is subject to collapsing and sticking together. As further defined, the second container includes peripheral walls made from a flexible plastic material that, when subject to heat sterilization, are subject to collapsing and sticking together. As further defined in amended claim 1, the flexible transfer tubing includes an air tube extending a certain distance into the air reservoir and creating a space between the peripheral walls of the second container and the air tube. The air tube and the space are sized and configured to provide contain an incremental air volume of air for the system so that collapse the collapsing and sticking together of the peripheral

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please amend Figs. 3B; 3C; 4B; 4C; and 4E as indicated in red line on the attached mark-ups.

Also enclosed is a clean set of drawings with replacement sheets.

wall of the flexible transfer tubing and the peripheral walls of the second container is are prevented during heat sterilization.

Balteau does not teach or suggest a system, as defined in amended claim 1, that includes a first container coupled by flexible tubing to a second container having peripheral walls made from a flexible plastic material that, when subject to heat sterilization, are subject to collapsing and sticking together. Blateau also does not teach or suggest the inclusion of an air tube that extends a certain distance into the second container to prevent the collapsing and sticking together of both the flexible tubing and the peripheral walls of the second container during heat sterilization. In Balteau, at least one of the walls of second container 10 is purposely made from nonuniformly roughened finished surfaces to prevent the walls from sticking together during heat sterilization. The port tubes entering the second container include "extensions" that are sized and configured to facilitate fluid flow into and out of the container 10, not to prevent collapse and sticking – which Balteau addresses by changing the mechanical properties of the container walls. There is no teaching or suggestion or comprehension in Balteau of how to prevent collapse and sticking in a system that does not alter the physical properties of the container walls that is subject to heat sterilization.

Page likewise does not teach or suggest or comprehend the solution of the problem of the prevention of collapse and sticking in a system that does not alter the physical property of the container walls.

The applicant will submit an appropriate terminal disclaimer upon an indication of allowance of the pending claims.

For these reasons, allowance of claims 1 to 4 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

By_____
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Registration No. 29,243

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FIG. 3B

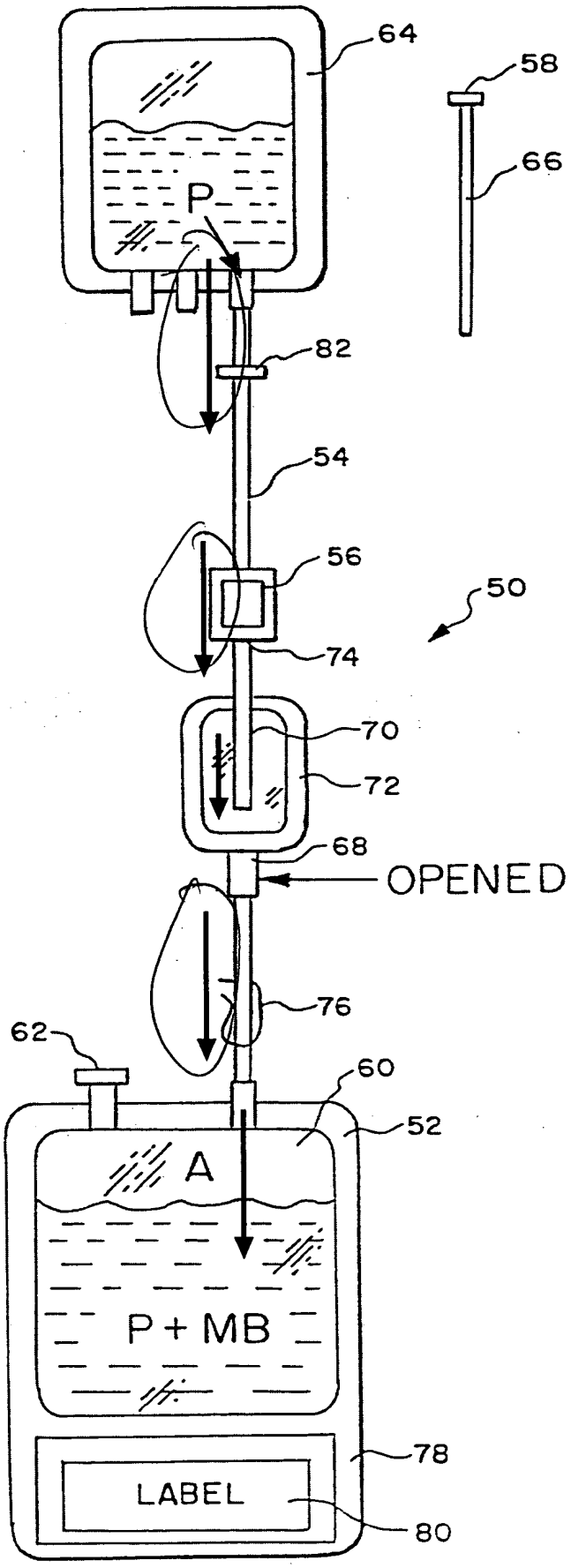
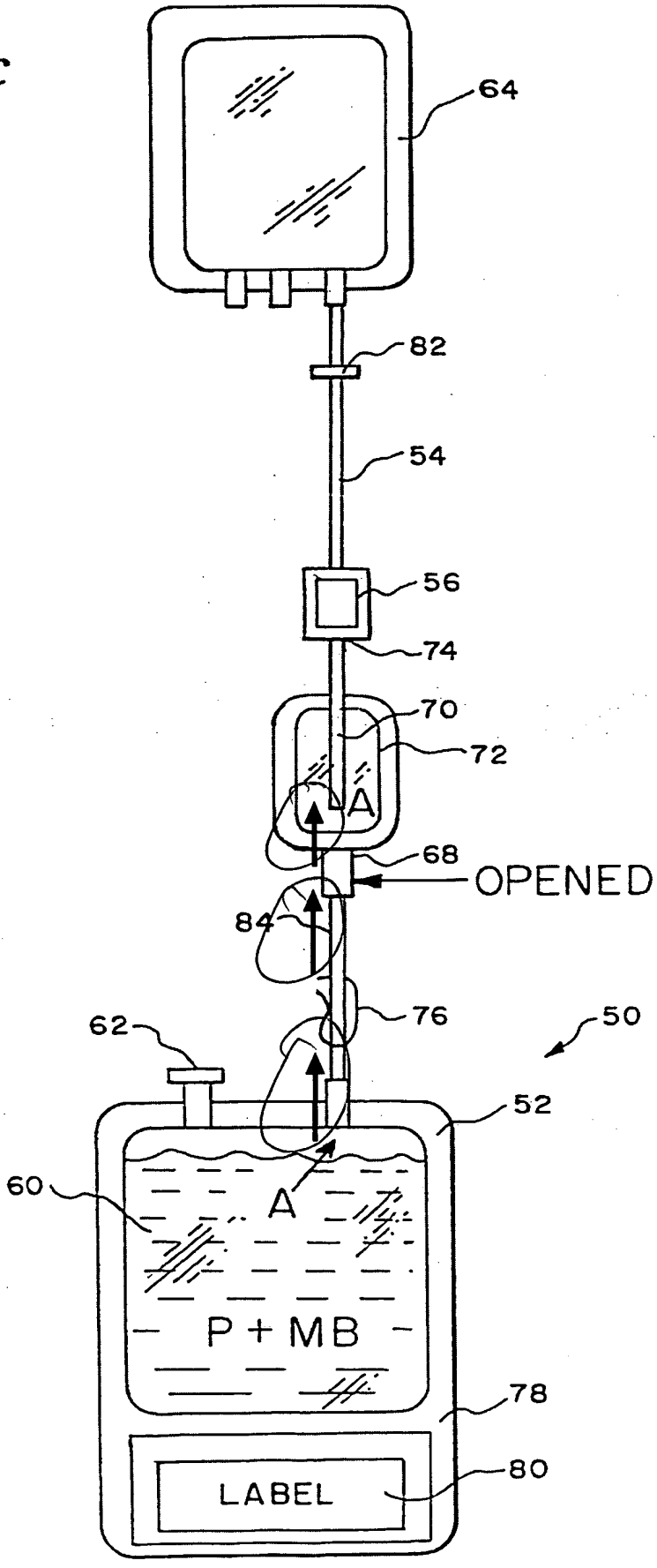


FIG. 3C



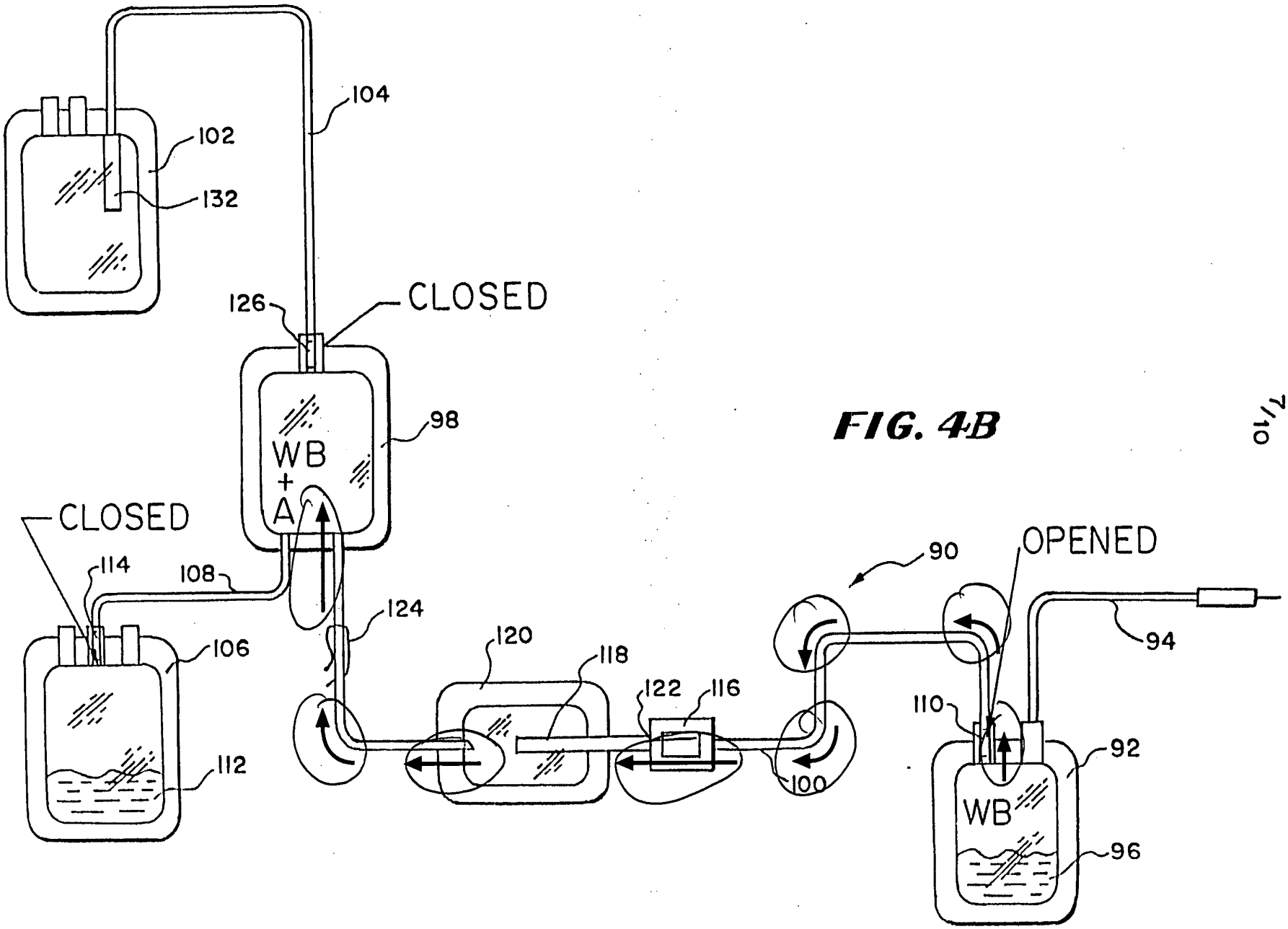

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FIG. 4B

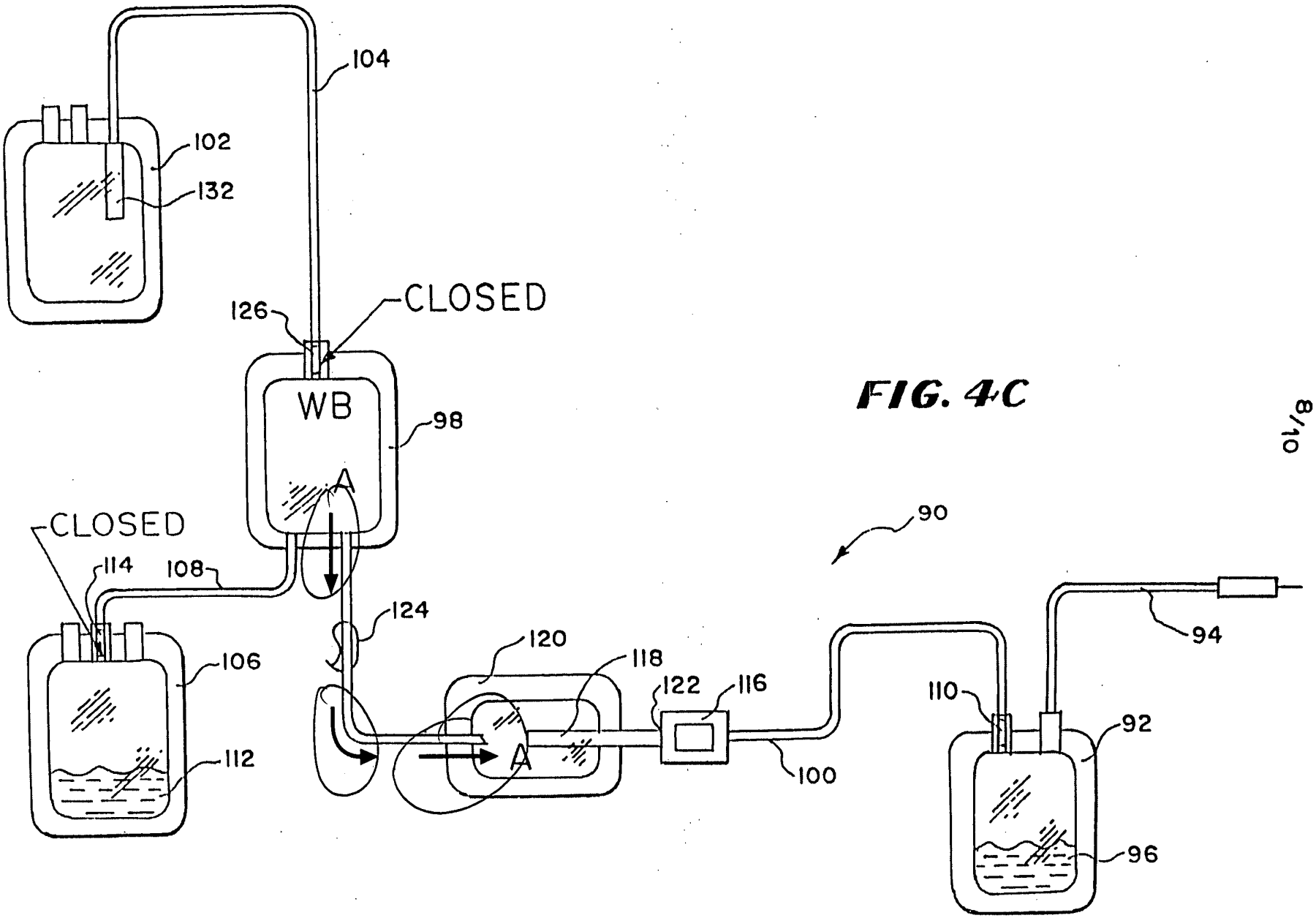
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FIG. 4C

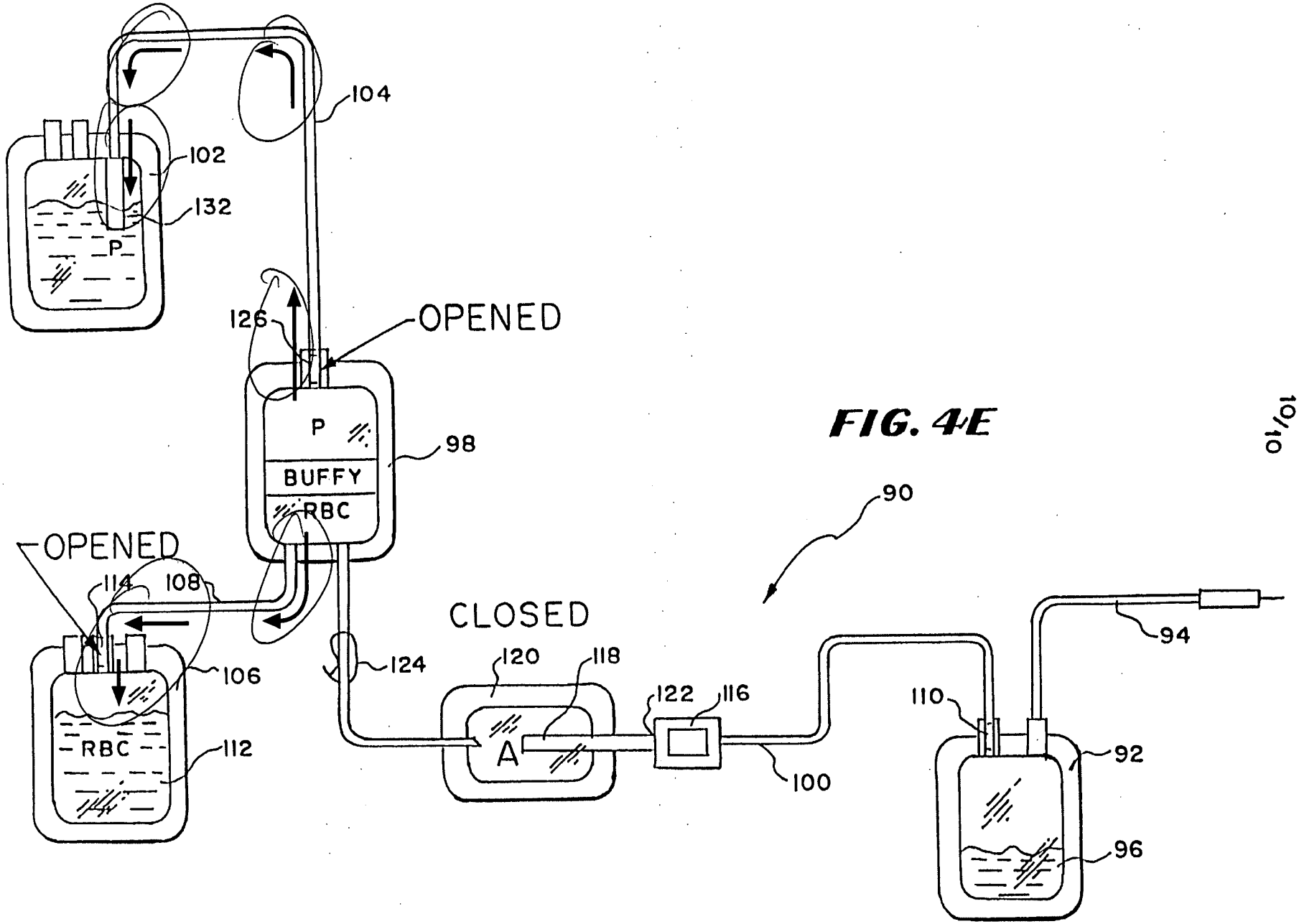
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FIG. 4E